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ABSTRACT

Findings of a study that examined the relationship between superintendents' leadership styles and educational change are presented in this paper, with a focus on the implementation of the EDUCATION 2000 National Model Schools Network, a site-based school improvement and restructuring initiative of the American Forum for Global Education. The project seeks to identify student needs for the 21st century and to design a comprehensive K-12 curriculum plan to meet those needs. Data were collected from observations, documents, and interviews with superintendents and steering committee members in a rural and an urban school district. Findings suggest that contextual factors, such as appropriateness of the proposed innovation and reasons for commitment to the project, significantly affected initiation and implementation in both districts. The degree of superintendent involvement with key educational stakeholders influenced project outcomes, illustrating the superintendent's critical role in facilitating or inhibiting an environment conducive to change. The potential for institutionalizing educational change is greatly increased if the process includes the active involvement and unambiguous commitment of the superintendent, shared leadership roles, participatory decision-making critical inquiry, self-education, support of partners, and adequate time and resources. Three figures are included. (Contains 58 references.) (LMI)

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The Critical Role of the Superintendent in School Reform

This study explored and described the relationship between the leadership style of superintendents and educational change as demonstrated by the implementation of the EDUCATION 2000 National Model Schools Network, a site-based school improvement and restructuring initiative of The American Forum for Global Education. EDUCATION 2000 seeks to empower educational stakeholders in a community to identify the knowledge, attitudes, and competencies students will need to function as responsible citizens in the 21st century and to design an overarching K-12 curriculum blueprint to meet those needs. Data were collected from observations, documents, and interviews with superintendents and steering committee members and used to prepare case studies of a rural and an urban school district. Contextual factors, such as appropriateness of the proposed innovation and reasons for commitment to the project, appeared to greatly affect the initiation and implementation of the EDUCATION 2000 model in both school districts. Findings from a cross-site analysis suggested that the extent to which the superintendent was actively involved with key stakeholders in the process of educational change influenced project outcomes. These findings support the critical role of the superintendent in facilitating or inhibiting an environment in which change can occur. A discussion of the implications focused on the basic assumption that if educational stakeholders are empowered to change--through a process inclusive of active involvement and unambiguous commitment of the superintendent to the change project, shared leadership roles, participatory decision-making, critical inquiry, self-education, support of partners, adequate time and resources--the potential for institutionalizing education change is greatly increased.

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In its 1983 report, A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform, the National Commission on Excellence in Education warned that America's system of public education was "being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity." This controversial report was one of several issued that year that collectively came to be known as the first wave of an education reform movement (Jacobson & Conway, 1990). The reforms of the early 1980's were focused on student achievement and excellence.

The second wave of the reform movement was initiated by Tomorrow's Teachers and Teachers for the 21st Century, the respective 1986 reports of the Holmes Group and the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (Jacobson & Conway, 1990). These reports argued that the initial recommendations of the first wave would provide cosmetic changes in the educational system and that lasting educational improvement was contingent on the restructuring of the roles and opportunities available to teachers and administrators. The second reform movement challenged individuals involved in the delivery of educational services to reexamine the structure, content, and purposes of schools. An apparently broadened concept of educational leadership and educational change, the second reform movement focused attention on shared leadership and participatory decision-making.

The purpose of the present study was to explore and describe the relationship between the leadership style of

superintendents and educational change as demonstrated by the implementation of the EDUCATION 2000 National Model Schools Network, a school improvement initiative of The American Forum for Global Education which seeks to empower educational stakeholders through knowledge-based inquiry to prepare, evaluate, refine and implement a comprehensive plan for restructuring their schools.

In order to test the hypothesis that the leadership of the superintendent, as reflected in the implementation of the EDUCATION 2000 model, is related to educational change, the research design for this study was focused on three central questions:

1. How does the leadership context in which the EDUCATION 2000 model is implemented affect the development of the project?

2. How does leadership style influence implementation of the EDUCATION 2000 model?

3. To what extent is leadership style related to educational change?

Findings from the present study added to the research base on educational change and innovation by revealing insights into the leadership component of the change process.

Context of Problem

Understanding the relationship between the leadership style of superintendents and educational change, a

leadership issue, was studied within the context of global education by investigating the implementation of the EDUCATION 2000 model, a school reform project rooted in global education.

The EDUCATION 2000 National Model Schools Network is a long-term school renewal project of The American Forum for Global Education to identify, support, and link together school districts across the United States that are committed to preparing their students for life in the 21st century. For the purposes of the present study, EDUCATION 2000 is an operational model of educational change. Focused on program implementation, the EDUCATION 2000 model provided an appropriate environment for studying the leadership style of superintendents and educational change.

Initiated in 1987, EDUCATION 2000 comprises a process for leadership development and school improvement that directly involves educational stakeholders in addressing the central question: "What kinds of schools and schooling will our children need for their life in the twenty-first century" (Kniep & Martin, 1989, p. 1)?

Consequently, the ultimate objective of each of the school districts participating in the EDUCATION 2000 project is to create an educational blueprint or overarching curricular document that will guide decisions concerning the substance, practice, and structures as educational reform strategies are implemented. As a system-wide strategy for school change, this project places the responsibility for

determining needs, researching options, selecting programs, and implementing changes on the people directly associated with the school system, rather than imposing change from outside.

School districts and their communities participate in a process of self-education and shared decision-making to discover local, state, national and global realities as a basis for shaping the mission and goals of school programs. The project steering committee (a) develops a K-12 curricular blueprint for all subject areas, (b) sets priorities for educational outcomes, (c) creates plans for staff development to meet local needs, and (d) provides support and resources for implementation. Researchers at The American Forum for Global Education believe that the success of the EDUCATION 2000 project is dependent upon the extent to which steering committee members are able to engage parents, teachers, administrators, and other educational stakeholders in setting the school's mission and goals, and in program planning.

The basic assumption upon which EDUCATION 2000 is built has to do with how school change takes place: that if educational stakeholders are empowered to change-- through a process of self-education, critical inquiry, support of partners, adequate time and resources--change can occur (Kniep & Martin 1989). This assumption about school change is the focus for the research and documentation tasks of the EDUCATION 2000 project.

Background of Problem

The successive implications of the major reform reports of the 1980's provided the context for educational reform. The first wave of reform, initiated by A Nation At Risk (1983), was characterized by the imposition of top-down reforms focused on (a) raising academic standards, (b) increasing efficiency and accountability, (c) improving productivity, and (d) attaining excellence. Literature related to the first wave of educational reform is reflected in the research on effective schools and school improvement. Studies reviewed in this body of literature, concerned with the leadership of the superintendent in the change process, presented findings which suggested that district level administrators affect school improvement programs by: (a) establishing a climate for change; and (b) exhibiting active backing in the form of communicated expectations for success, psychological support, needed resources, and local facilitation assistance (Clark, Lotto, & Astuto, 1984).

Change in schools is currently undergoing a second wave of reform, produced by issues generated by Tomorrow's Teachers (1986) and A nation prepared: Teachers for the 21st century (1986). The current reform agenda suggests a more holistic approach to educational change, and focuses on the systematic nature of school systems in restructuring public education. Attention is given to (a) participatory decision-making and collegiality, (b) shared leadership roles, (c) site-based management, and (d) higher order

thinking skills.

Research on the leadership of the superintendent and school change focused on issues produced by the second wave of school reform is reflected in literature on educational change and innovation. Studies in this area of literature described (a) leadership roles, (b) the process of educational change, and (c) characteristics of the change project. These constructs are relevant to understanding the relationship between the leadership style of the superintendent and educational change as demonstrated by implementation of the EDUCATION 2000 National Model Schools Network.

Although most of the school reform reports emphasized the principal's role and ignored the superintendent's role in the change process, and stated that change in schools can occur without the superintendent, there is a growing body of literature to suggest that the leadership of the superintendent of schools is a critical component in institutionalizing educational change. Research indicated that change efforts are more likely to succeed when the superintendent is an active supporter (Fullan, 1982; Paulu, 1988). Findings from studies on educational change and innovation identified administrative (a) commitment, (b) support, and (c) communication that change is a priority as factors found to be determinants of success and effectiveness of educational change (Huberman & Miles, 1984; Hall & Guzman, 1984; Fullan, 1987).

Several studies focused on the superintendent's role in the change process as adopting or initiating, implementing, and continuing or institutionalizing educational change (Fullan, 1982; Newton, 1987). Paulu (1988) suggested including those individuals affected by the reform in all phases of the change process. Other studies described the controlling role of the superintendent in facilitating change (Cuban, 1984; Peterson, 1984; Murphy, Peterson, & Hallinger, 1986; Peterson, Murphy, & Hallinger, 1987; and Wissler & Ortiz, 1988).

Researchers concerned with the leadership style of the superintendent described his or her style as either initiating, responding, or managing (Murphy, Hord, Rutherford, Stiegelbauer, Hall, Huling-Austin & Muscella, 1986); and related leadership styles to the effectiveness of the implementation efforts (Murphy, Hord, et al., 1986; Wissler & Ortiz, 1988; Reecer, 1989).

Researchers also acknowledged the relevance of context to the change process and utilized their findings to suggest that the values, norms, and climate for change within the organization are immediate and powerful conditions for facilitating or inhibiting change (Fullan, 1987; Schein, 1987; Newton, 1987; Paulu, 1988; Reecer, 1989). As the official organizational leader, or member of a leadership team that facilitated the change process, the superintendent was described as encompassing a critical and distinctive role in creating an environment in which change can occur.

Several recent reports and research studies presented suggestions to facilitate long-term, systematic educational reform and included shared leadership and participatory decision-making in the process (New York Council of School Superintendents, 1987; Commission on Public School Administration and Leadership, 1988; Woodside, 1988; NEA-Mastery in Learning Project, 1989). These reports implied that a priority task of the superintendent is to build the capacity of the school district so that it is able to handle restructuring and educational change.

The research literature on educational change and innovation has provided information connecting leadership issues with educational change. In summary, researchers strongly suggested that superintendents play a critical role in the change process. Fullan (1982) claimed that what superintendents do at each of the three main phases of change--initiation, implementation, and institutionalization-- significantly affects the destiny of the proposed change.

A review of the literature on educational change and innovation signaled that studies are needed to investigate the processes involved in the restructuring of public education and the transformation of education directed by design. Specifically, studies are needed that: (a) are focused on the interactive relationship between the superintendent's leadership style, educational context, and the process of planned educational change within the context

of a current school reform project; and (b) are directed at determining the extent to which the leadership of the superintendent is related to educational change.

Theoretical Framework

The process developed for educational reform as reflected in the implementation of the EDUCATION 2000 model, or the transformation of education directed by design, is a systems approach to schooling and provided the theoretical framework for exploring the relationship between the leadership style of superintendents and educational change. Banathy (1990) provided a definition of systems thinking that influenced the design of the present study:

> Based on systems theory and guided by a systematic world view of systems philosophy, systems inquiry orchestrates the findings of various disciplines and introduces systems approaches and methods to the analysis, design, development, and management of complex organizations and societal systems. Education is such a system. Systems thinking helps us to understand the nature of education as a complex and dynamic system that operates in ever changing environments and interacts with a variety of other societal systems. (p. 4)

The application of systems thinking in education enabled researchers to explore and describe: (a) the embeddedness of education in the context of larger societal systems; (b) the interdependency of schools and their environments; and (c) the nature of education as a complex system of loosely coupled interacting components and relationships, such as leadership and context.

The systems model developed at Far West Laboratory

(1988) to guide educational redesign reflects several basic premises that support the EDUCATION 2000 model:

1. School districts need to generate their own capacity for conducting ongoing inquiry into how to improve their programs, processes, and structures.
2. Educational systems should take an evolutionary view of themselves.
3. The appropriate focus for analysis and design is at the level of the learner and the learning experience.
4. Efforts at inquiry should address the entire range of educational system issues.
5. The success of efforts to improve or restructure balances on the good will and commitment of all participants and especially those ultimately affected by any changes. (p. 80)

In the ecological view of school renewal upon which EDUCATION 2000 is based, the EDUCATION 2000 model is designed from the perspective of the whole system embedded in its environment. Change is promoted from within the school district rather than being imposed from outside; and while the process involves a district-wide strategy for educational reform, the target in the project is the individual school.

The process of empowerment, a component of planned educational change, is reflected in the EDUCATION 2000 model and involves shared leadership and participatory decision-making. Within this context, empowerment means opportunity to share authority and responsibility, and is characterized by a collaborative effort with each part contributing to the ecology of the whole.

Theory on transformational leadership, Burns (1978) and Bass (1985), and organizational culture, Schein (1987),

provided insight into the leadership role of the superintendent in the change process. Transformational leadership was viewed both as a microlevel influence process between individuals in a school district, and as a macrolevel process of empowering the steering committee--and the community--to change social systems and renew public schools.

Schein (1987) explained how leadership is intertwined with culture (a) formation, (b) evolution, (c) transformation, and (d) destruction. He concluded that leadership is the fundamental process by which organizational cultures are formed and changed.

The underlying assumption in change literature is that change is a process, not an event. Fullan (1982) described the dynamics of educational change as a multidimensional, sociopolitical process involving a variety of factors which interact and affect the process of change. Fullan identified three broad phases to the change process: (a) initiation or adoption; (b) implementation or initial use; and (c) institutionalization or continuation.

The EDUCATION 2000 model unfolds in three stages that parallel the conceptual stages of the change process. Research studies indicated that what happens at one phase in the change process strongly affects subsequent stages. In summary, the superintendent's conceptual understanding of (a) the dynamics of organization, (b) the processes of change, and (c) the organizational culture of his or her

school district represent the most generative source of ideas for developing a collaborative plan for educational reform.

Definition of Constructs

For the purposes of the present study:

1. Leadership context was defined as the extent of a school district's positive attitude towards, and involvement in, educational change and innovation.

2. Project development or implementation of EDUCATION 2000 was defined as the extent to which changes in decision-making processes and role responsibilities of teachers, administrators, and community members evolve.

3. Leadership style was defined as the strategies employed by a superintendent to involve educational stakeholders--teachers, administrators, parents, and community members--in the process of initiating and implementing the EDUCATION 2000 model.

4. Impact of project or educational change was defined as the extent to which the EDUCATION 2000 project affects educational goals, attitudes, behaviors, roles, decision-making processes, and organizational structures.

Significance of Study

Public schools appear to be moving from traditional, mechanistic structures to emerging, organic structures. Teacher empowerment, site-based management, shifting political agendas, and the explosion of information and

communication technologies are key factors that are currently shaping educational organizations.

A review of the literature on educational change and innovation suggested that the leadership of the superintendent of schools is a major component in the change process. Understanding this relationship could affect the selection of school districts involved in educational change projects and thus enhance the success of school restructuring efforts.

The American Forum for Global Education is primarily concerned with (a) the effects of the community and educational context in which the EDUCATION 2000 model is implemented, (b) the influence of the model on decision-making processes for changing or not changing schools and their programs, and (c) the extent to which implementing the model leads to change.

Although the leadership of the superintendent is an implied component of the context, process, and impact measures developed by Kniep and Martin to document the process of change, the apparent lack of focus on leadership issues relating the superintendent to initiating, implementing, and institutionalizing the EDUCATION 2000 model suggested a need to explore these constructs. Similarly, a void of studies focused on the superintendency exists in the literature on educational change and innovation. This deficiency further supported the need to pursue the present study.

METHODOLOGY

Description of the Participants

This study involved participants in the EDUCATION 2000 project--a rural and an urban school district which represented two national sites--and focused on the superintendent of schools and the project steering committee. The steering committee is broadly representative of the educational stakeholders within the district and the larger community. In the rural school district the committee is comprised of: (a) eight elementary and secondary teachers; (b) four administrators, including the superintendent; (c) one university representative; (d) a school board member; and (e) three community representatives. In the urban community the steering committee consists of: (a) eight elementary and secondary teachers; (b) eight administrators; (c) two parent representatives; and (d) one representative each from the business sector, State Education Department, and university partner. The research coordinator and project directors were interviewed to provide additional information for within-site and cross-site analysis.

The project sites selected as subjects for the present study were recommended by The American Forum as representative of sites furthest along in the process of implementing the EDUCATION 2000 model. The rural school district (RSD) is located in an agricultural region of a midwestern state. Two major concerns are population growth

and the rural agricultural economy. The present population in the community is under 6,000 and is expected to increase 20% by the year 2000.

The urban school district (USD), with a population close to 190,000, is located in a culturally and economically diverse community in a middle Atlantic state in which the schools are under a desegregation order of the Federal Courts. The desegregation of schools and housing has been the most prominent issue for this city. The global and multicultural perspective embodied in the EDUCATION 2000 model enabled USD's participation in the project to be part of the Court approved plan to restructure and eliminate any vestiges of segregation in the school district. The decision to implement the EDUCATION 2000 model was supported by (a) the district's administration, (b) the teachers' union, (c) the community Business Alliance, (d) the State Education Department, and (e) the Parents Teachers Students Association.

Design

The interaction of ideas, processes, and leadership involved in the EDUCATION 2000 project--to develop consensus on an educational agenda and implement a comprehensive plan for restructuring their schools-- constitutes the subject matter of the present study. For purposes of data collection and data analysis, the data were categorized into four constructs: (a) leadership style; (b) leadership

context; (c) project development/implementation of the EDUCATION 2000 model; and (d) impact of project/educational change. A model of the research design (see Figure 1) suggests an interactive relationship between the variables.

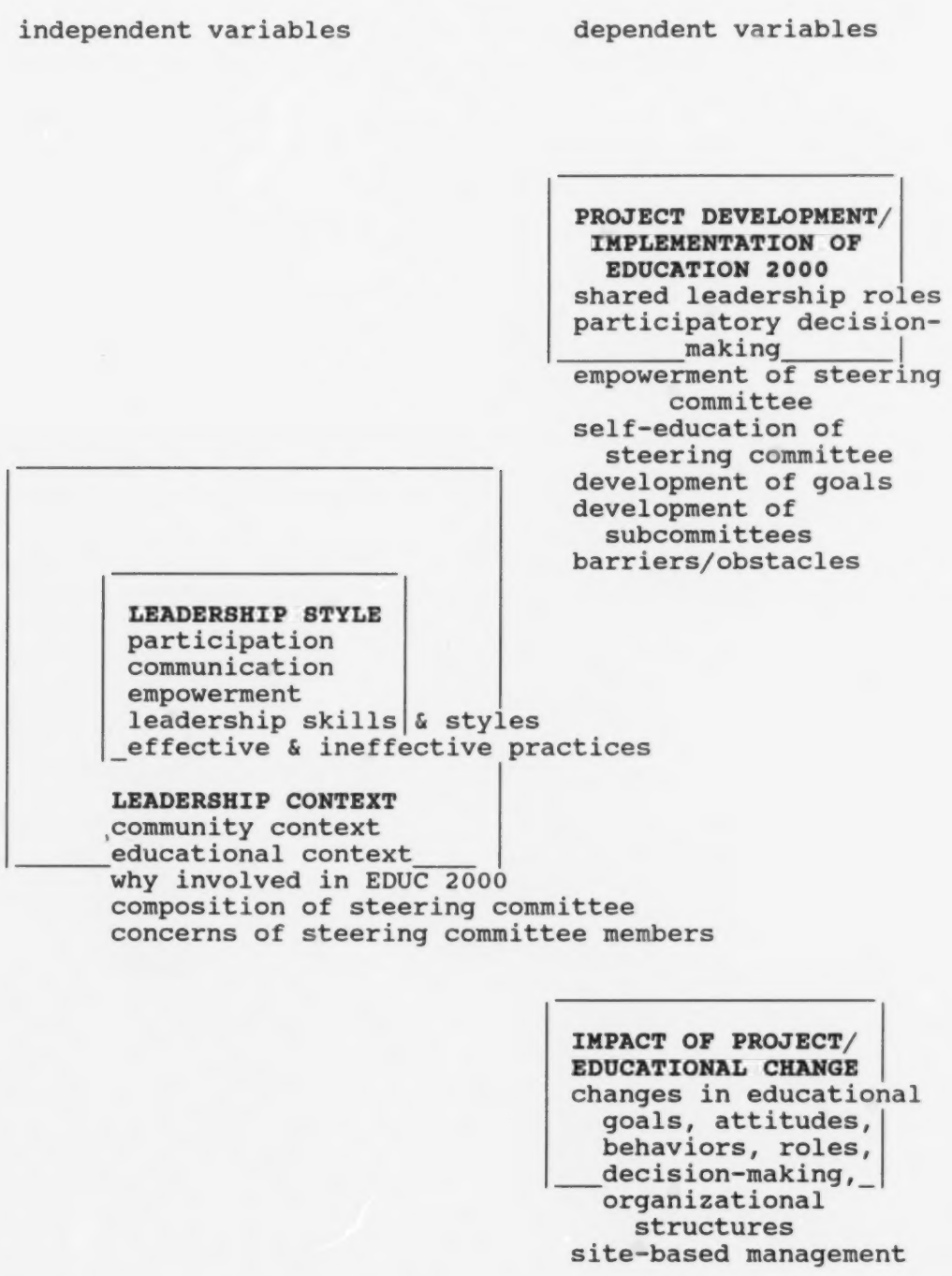
Procedures

The three primary modes of data collection utilized to explore the leadership style of the superintendent as it related to educational change were observation, interview, and document collection. One week was spent in each participating school district to develop relationships and gather data. The role of participant observer at steering committee meetings, task force meetings, and a school board meeting in the urban school district provided the researcher with opportunities for direct observation and recording of events in context.

Semi-structured taped interviews, employing open-ended questions, were conducted with (a) the superintendents, (b) selected steering committee members, and (c) project directors in each site. Informal interviews with project directors provided additional information about (a) steering committee members' views of the EDUCATION 2000 project, (b) relationships within the district, and (c) the leadership of the superintendent.

Documents collected from rural and urban site visits represented a significant source of data. EDUCATION 2000 phase 1 and phase 2 research reports were provided by

Figure 1. Research Design Showing Variables and Their Components



The American Forum for Global Education and used to describe the educational contexts and confirm data from interviews and observations.

Although informal data analysis was on-going from the beginning of data collection, specific methods for drawing and verifying conclusions were implemented during the data analysis stage. The process involved utilization of contact and document summary forms to reduce the amount of information collected into a smaller set of categories, themes, or patterns (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Interviews with the national research coordinator and project directors, including feedback from informants, were used to substantiate the defined categories or variables and proposed relationships between variables.

Taped interviews, transcribed word-for-word by the researcher, field notes from observations, and collected documents provided the foundation for a descriptive case study of each school district. These studies were developed to answer the three central research questions and reflect findings from within-site analysis. Findings from a cross-site analysis are included in the discussion.

Assessment Techniques

Strategies were developed to provide data for answering the three central research questions, and relating the independent and dependent variables identified in the research design (see Figure 2).

Interview questions for superintendents and steering committee members were developed by the researcher to be consistent with EDUCATION 2000 context, process, and impact measures, and to gather information related to the four variables identified in the research design. A common, semistructured list of interview questions was used to gather data during scheduled meetings with superintendents (see Figure 3). Interview questions for selected steering committee members and project directors were similar in content to the questions developed for superintendents (see Figure 4). A description of leadership skills was provided for each participant. Informal interview questions for project directors, informants, focused on the leadership style of the superintendent.

Figure 2. Assessment Techniques

Variables	Sources of Data
LEADERSHIP CONTEXT	
extent of a district's positive attitude towards and involvement in educational change and innovation	(a) Demographics (b) EDUC 2000 report of community context* (c) Interviews with superintendents and steering committee members
PROJECT DEVELOPMENT/IMPLEMENTATION OF MODEL	
extent to which changes in decision-making processes and role responsibilities of teachers, administrators, & community members evolve	(a) EDUC 2000 survey of steering committee members* (b) Interviews with superintendents and steering committee members (c) Observations at steering committee meetings
LEADERSHIP STYLE	
strategies employed by a superintendent to involve educational stakeholders in the process of educational change	(a) Interviews with superintendents and steering committee members (b) Observations at steering committee meetings & school board meetings
IMPACT OF PROJECT/EDUCATIONAL CHANGE	
extent to which the project affects educational goals, attitudes, behaviors, roles, decision-making, and organizational structures	(a) EDUC 2000 structures report* (b) Interviews with superintendents and steering committee members

* Contained in EDUCATION 2000 phase 1 research reports (RSD & USD) and EDUCATION 2000 phase 2 research report (RSD)

Figure 3. Interview Questions for Superintendent

(1)How do you define innovation? (assuming we classify EDUCATION 2000 as an innovation) How is this project different from other innovations?
(leadership context)

(2)What are the benefits of educational change to you? To this school district?
(leadership context)

(3)What needs to happen so that this district has the capacity to handle innovations? (administrative support)
(leadership style and **project development)**

(4)Why is this school district involved in the EDUCATION 2000 project? How are you, and your peers, affected by a state mandate for global education?
(leadership context)

(5)What are your goals for this project? Are these communicated and/or shared by others? Have your perceptions related to your goals changed? Explain.
(leadership style and **project development)**

(6)What is your understanding of empowerment? Are you empowering other district administrators and principals to participate in this project? Can you give me examples?
(leadership style and **project development)**

(7)The fate of many innovative programs appears to be related to the superintendent's length of term in office. What is your role in assuring that EDUCATION 2000 continues if you were to resign?
(leadership style)

(8)What barriers are you encountering in initiating and/or implementing this project? What other obstacles do you anticipate?
(leadership context and **project development)**

(9)How do your describe your leadership style for this project? How do others describe your leadership style?
(leadership style)

(10)Can you use examples to describe your role in the EDUCATION 2000 project?
Refer to tasks or functions performed related to the steering committee, resource center, communication within the school district and community, university affiliate, and grant proposals.
(leadership style and **project development)**

(11) During the current year, to what extent did you use the following skills? Explain with examples.
Group functioning:
Training:
Administrative/organizational:
Initiative-taking:
Trust/rapport/building:
Support:
Confrontation:
Conflict mediation:
Collaboration:
Confidence-building:
Diagnosing individuals:
Managing/controlling:
Resource-bringing:
(**leadership style**)

(12) What is your primary facilitation style? (responding, managing, or initiating)
(**leadership style**)

(13) Can you give me examples of your actions, practices, and/or attitudes that have been effective in facilitating the work of the steering committee?
(**leadership style** and **project development**)

(14) Can you give me examples of your actions, practices, and/or attitudes that have been ineffective or problematic in facilitating the work of the steering committee?
(**leadership style** and **project development**)

(15) How was the steering committee developed? What if the steering committee develops a plan that you are opposed to?
(**leadership style**)

(16) Has your role changed over the course of this project? If so, how?
(**project development**)

(17) Have there been any changes in your school system since the initiation of the EDUCATION 2000 model? Relate to thoughts about educational goals, attitudes and behaviors, roles, decision-making processes, and structural changes.
(**impact of project/educational change**)

Figure 4. Questions for Steering Committee Members

(1) How do you define innovation? (assuming we classify EDUCATION 2000 as an innovation) How is this project different from other innovations? (**leadership context**)

(2) What are the benefits of educational change to you? To this school district? (**leadership context**)

(3) How actively involved is the superintendent in the EDUCATION 2000 project? How is his participation visible? (**leadership style** and **project development**)

(4) Why is this school district involved in the EDUCATION 2000 project? How are you, and your peers, affected by a state mandate for global education? (**leadership context**)

(5) What do you think are the most important goals for this project? To what extent is your understanding of this project shared by other steering committee members? By the superintendent? By your colleagues? By the parents and other members of the community? (**leadership style** and **project development**)

(6) What is your understanding of empowerment? As a member of the steering committee, do you feel empowered to develop a strategic plan? If so, by whom? Can you explain your responsibility or role on this committee. (**leadership style** and **project development**)

(7) The fate of many innovative programs appears to be related to the superintendent's length of term in office. What do you suppose would happen to this project if there was a change in district leadership? (**leadership style**)

(8) What barriers are you encountering in initiating and/or implementing EDUCATION 2000? What other obstacles do you anticipate? (**leadership context** and **project development**)

(9) How would you describe the superintendent's leadership style for this project? Is this style productive? (**leadership style**)

(10) Can you use examples to describe the superintendent's role in the EDUCATION 2000 project? Refer to tasks or functions performed related to the steering committee, resource center, communication

within the school district and community, university affiliate, and grant proposals.
(**leadership style** and **project development**)

(11) During the current year, to what extent did the superintendent use the following skills? Explain.
Group functioning:
Training:
Administrative/organizational:
Initiative-taking:
Trust/rapport/building:
Support:
Confrontation:
Conflict mediation:
Collaboration:
Confidence-building:
Diagnosing individuals:
Managing/controlling:
Resource-bringing:
(**leadership style**)

(12) What is the superintendent's primary facilitation style, related and unrelated to EDUCATION 2000? (responding, managing, or initiating)
(**leadership style**)

(13) Can you give me examples of the superintendent's actions, practices, and/or attitudes that have been effective in facilitating the work of the steering committee?
(**leadership style** and **project development**)

(14) Can you give me examples of the superintendent's actions, practices, and/or attitudes that have been ineffective or problematic in facilitating the work of the steering committee?
(**leadership style** and **project development**)

(15) How was the steering committee developed? What do you suppose would happen if the steering committee develops a plan that the superintendent is opposed to?
(**leadership style**)

(16) Has the superintendent's role changed over the course of this project? If so, how?
(**project development**)

(17) Have there been any changes in your school system since the initiation of the EDUCATION 2000 model? Relate to thoughts about educational goals, attitudes and behaviors, roles, decision-making processes, and structural changes.
(**impact of project/educational change**)

FINDINGS

Case Study of a Rural School District

How Contextual Factors Affect the Change Process

Contextual factors appeared to greatly affect the development of the EDUCATION 2000 project during the initiation and implementation phases. The superintendent discussed the district's conservative policies, explaining that historically RSD has been a bureaucratic school system with few changes and limited communication. The decision-making process and initiation of school improvement programs tended to reside with the school board and the administration. Recent political problems within the community, related to a new building project, exemplified the need to proceed cautiously with EDUCATION 2000. The superintendent discussed the gradual change from a bureaucracy to a more participatory management style:

> They were used to a very autocratic set up when I came here [1982]. You've got to remember they've only had two superintendents in fifty years. . . . With retirements, I've been able to bring in three new administrators, and they're all participatory; that's my style. . . . I think there is a great deal of working relationships that have improved, and I think people are starting to see K-12, and talking about problems and how education affects kids.

The absence of clarity and consensus among steering committee members in describing the purpose and process of initiating, implementing, and institutionalizing the EDUCATION 2000 National Model Schools Network project created some differences and frustration in project perceptions. Several steering committee members, including

the superintendent, were initially reluctant to display a strong commitment to the project, and described the decision to become involved with the project as it related to infusing global perspectives into the K-12 curriculum rather than educational change. The superintendent expressed his views concerning the intent of EDUCATION 2000:

> If someone had told me in the beginning about school reform, transformation, there is no way . . . we applied not knowing that it was going to be this, today. I thank heavens it's been a great experience.

Responding to why this district is involved in the EDUCATION 2000 project, steering committee members presented similar reasons:

> It was just going to be global infusion into the curriculum. That's what he [the superintendent] was told and that's how everybody wrote it. All the documentation in the beginning shows that it was about curriculum.

Several steering committee members, particularly those with young children, were less concerned with identifying EDUCATION 2000 as either global education curricula or school restructuring. They grasped the opportunity to be involved with improving the education of their children. Another common response from teachers to questions pertaining to their involvement with EDUCATION 2000 was interest in being part of the leadership team to develop new curriculum for the school district. Others cited "the opportunity of becoming involved in a project that others could look at . . . there were no molds to follow, and that's really attractive."

It became apparent to the researcher that the inability of the administration, particularly the superintendent, to initially present the EDUCATION 2000 project with commitment and clarity inhibited this rural school district's positive attitude towards, and involvement in, educational change. It is thus suggested by the researcher that greater comprehensibility on behalf of the superintendent and other steering committee members of process and project outcomes would enhance initiation and implementation of the EDUCATION 2000 model.

How Leadership Strategies are Related to the Change Process

The leadership style of the superintendent, described as strategies employed to involve educational stakeholders in the process to initiate and implement the EDUCATION 2000 model, focused on (a) participation and communication; (b) empowerment; (c) leadership skills and styles; and (d) actions, practices, and/or attitudes of the superintendent that have been effective, or ineffective, in facilitating the work of the steering committee.

All members of the steering committee expressed concern with the superintendent's level of involvement in the initiation and implementation phases of EDUCATION 2000. Steering committee members tended to relate the superintendent's apparent inability for consistent, active participation to a perceived lack of administrative commitment to, and support of, this project. The

superintendent explained his limited involvement with EDUCATION 2000 by relating the complexity of his responsibilities as superintendent of schools:

> I'm the business manager for this project. I sit on the steering committee. Have I been able to make all the meetings? No. Do I end up with conflicts? Yes. Do I try to attend all that I can? You betcha, but at the same time, I can't be all things and in all places at the same time, especially when you have major projects like building a new school. . . . I want to be there as a supporter, but I cannot be one of the front liners because of my role.

Steering committee members tended to respond similarly when questioned about the superintendent's limited participation. One member explained:

> He's been a member of the steering committee, but he's let the building project and that kind of thing often get in the way of his whole participation. He'll show up, he'll leave, or he'll come late; sometimes he won't be there at all.

Most steering committee members perceived the superintendent's active participation necessary for implementing EDUCATION 2000. One member expressed the sentiments of many, stating, "sometimes I question whether or not it's being perceived as important by the administration." He added, "I don't think the changes that we are hoping for can ever happen unless he's involved."

The project site coordinator, concerned with community support, provided additional reasons, such as project credibility, for the superintendent's involvement:

> I think if the superintendent's visibility and moral support indicates that this is important, and this is the direction that we're heading, I think for the faculty, it helps us. . . it's a signal, I think, to our community members on the steering committee; I

> think it's important for them to see the superintendent there. . . what concerns us is that we're heading off in one direction and he's not with us.

Similar to participation and communication, empowerment is a strategy employed by the superintendent to involve steering committee members and other community leaders in the educational change process. The superintendent described empowerment as "the responsibility to make decisions that affect people."

Facilitating participation and involvement in educational change required the leadership skills of the superintendent and steering committee members. In response to an interview question about his use of particular leadership skills related to the EDUCATION 2000 project, the superintendent presented administrative/organizational; confrontation; conflict mediation; collaboration; diagnosing individuals; and resource bringing, pertaining to finances, as his strengths. The superintendent indicated weakness in areas of group functioning, specifically listening; trust/rapport building, related to communication; and support, due to his limited participation in implementing the EDUCATION 2000 model. The superintendent reflected on managing/controlling:

> I'm a concrete sequential type of person, where I've got to know, not that I have to be totally responsible, but I've got to know and have my hands in because I am responsible [to the board] and I take that seriously.

Steering committee members tended to present a different understanding of the superintendent's use of

leadership skills related to the EDUCATION 2000 project than the superintendent. Common understandings of the superintendent's leadership skills were reflected in conversations with steering committee members:

> He's in control of just about everything, from a big picture perspective. . . . I think he views his job as being the controller, once the parameters are set, and to make sure that we don't color outside the lines; and that we don't extend the budget and those are the things that he's directly responsible to the board for.

A teacher reflected on his communication skills:

> I would personally like to see more strength in his people skills. He's very good at superficial conversation. He's very task oriented and very good at making sure things get done and how people are doing within the organization. I think that's the way people were trained as administrators.

When asked to identify the superintendent's leadership style as either responding, managing, or initiating, steering committee members provided descriptions of the superintendent's leadership style which tended to overlap with the utilization of leadership skills. Most participants were indecisive in describing the superintendent as either responding, managing, or initiating. One response incorporated the thoughts of other steering committee members:

> I think he portrays all three to a certain degree. I think the initiative part would be the more dominant one most of the time. I think he manages to put the right people in the right places, in his eyes, and then he lets them go. . . . I think he is really open, as long as we stay within the parameters.

Reflecting on actions, practices, and/or attitudes that have inhibited the work of the steering committee, the

superintendent referred to his inability to attend all the steering committee meetings.

> I think they would say we need the superintendent more visible, or more involved so he knows exactly what's going on so we can surge ahead, maybe a little faster.

The superintendent speculated that his absence at steering committee meetings inhibited the decision-making process.

All steering committee members mentioned the superintendent's limited participation in the EDUCATION 2000 project as problematic to facilitating the work of the steering committee. It appeared that most steering committee members were reluctant to restructure their school system without the superintendent's active participation.

In summary, findings from a within-site analysis in RSD suggested that:

1. The inability of the administration, particularly the superintendent, to initially present the EDUCATION 2000 project with commitment and clarity inhibited the steering committee's positive attitude towards, and involvement in, educational change.
2. Changes in the decision-making process and responsibilities of teachers, administrators, and other community members selected to participate in the project were often facilitated, and at times inhibited, by the leadership style of the superintendent.
3. The ways in which the superintendent was involved with educational stakeholders in the process of initiating and

implementing the EDUCATION 2000 model was related to project outcomes.

CASE STUDY OF AN URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

How Contextual Factors Affect the Change Process

Contextual factors appeared to greatly affect the initiation and implementation of educational change in the urban school district. Historically, USD has been characterized by a top-down, highly bureaucratized system. The School Desegregation Decision of the Federal Court was the catalyst for historical changes in this urban school district. The EDUCATION 2000 project was established by action of the Board of Education after the district administration, with the support of the USD Federation of Teachers, the State Education Department, the USD Business Alliance, and the Parents Teachers Students Association recommended that USD become part of the EDUCATION 2000 National Model Schools Network. The global and multicultural perspective and curricular restructuring process embodied in EDUCATION 2000 enabled USD's participation in the project to be part of the Court approved plan to eliminate any vestiges of segregation in the school district. The project coordinator clarified the role of EDUCATION 2000:

> EDUCATION 2000 is part of the district's goal to provide quality education that reflects the pluralism of our community, and celebrates the rich diversity of its multi-cultural perspective; and it is supported by the superintendent and the president of the board.

The president of the Parents Teachers Students Council expressed a common concern within the community for participating in the EDUCATION 2000 project:

> I think the first thing that caught my attention was the word change because we just went through a big change with integration and we're talking about another change. I was real interested in what kind of changes they were thinking about making this time.

The district steering committee was created to develop and manage the process for initiating, implementing, and institutionalizing the EDUCATION 2000 model. From its inception, the steering committee had leadership representation from the Federation of Teachers, the Council of Administrators, the central district office administrators, the Parents Teachers Students Association, and The American Forum for Global Education. The composition of the steering committee, and the relationships created by its leadership, appeared to be a significant component of the context for facilitating educational change. The superintendent described the steering committee as representative of the leadership within the school district:

> I think the teachers were representative of the leadership because I think they were, for the most part, all union leaders; I mean leaders who were holding office on the executive council or some other department reps. These are strong leaders. . . . I believe that administrators are leaders; they all represent leadership. Whoever applied was considered, and then I wanted an array of people by roles.

Within the first four months of initiating the EDUCATION 2000 project, the steering committee was

recognized by the district as an autonomous body, and its membership was subject to compensation for their work when carrying out EDUCATION 2000 tasks outside their regular working day.

Most steering committee members shared a common understanding of project goals. The project coordinator explained how the steering committee will identify the attitudes, knowledge and skills that people will need to function competently as citizens of the twenty-first century:

> I see EDUCATION 2000 as offering an opportunity for designing a master plan; for offering a process through which we rethink some of the things that we have in place. . . . In this district, changes were imposed by the Courts, or the administration, and they did not come from the people involved; so now we have an opportunity to look at changes from the perspective of our own need. We can be proactive in meeting the needs of our children. The process that EDUCATION 2000 proposes means involving the community so that we get their input as to what they would like their schools to be; and what they think about education.

An examination of the context for initiating and implementing EDUCATION 2000 in the urban school district suggested that the consistently strong commitment to the project by the Superintendent and the Board of Education, supported by the leadership within the steering committee and the active participation of The American Forum for Global Education, greatly enhanced the development of this project for educational change.

How Leadership Strategies are Related to the Change Process

The leadership style of the superintendent tended to be influenced to some extent by the superintendent's extensive and varied experience in USD. Reflecting on 25 years in the school district, the superintendent explained:

> I started out as teacher, a guidance counselor; I was an assistant director of people personnel services; I was director of special education; I was a junior high school principal, a senior high school principal, director of instructional services, and now superintendent.

All steering committee members were aware of the superintendent's comprehensive background and suggested that it enhanced their relationship. Another teacher described how the superintendent supported the teachers during recent disputes surrounding a strike:

> He did everything he possibly could to help us get our contract settled. You can't expect better than that; superintendents don't do that; that's the way he is.

Furthermore, the leadership style of this superintendent, apparently related to his lengthy experience in USD, also focused on (a) participation and communication; (b) empowerment; (c) leadership skills and styles; and (d) actions, practices, and/or attitudes of the superintendent that have been effective in facilitating the work of the steering committee.

All members of the steering committee described, with clarity, the superintendent's active participation in facilitating the initiation and implementation of the EDUCATION 2000 model. It was common knowledge that the

superintendent enlisted the support of the administration and the teachers' union prior to recommending the project to the Board of Education. The superintendent described his level of involvement in EDUCATION 2000:

> I'm the chief spokesman for the district. I'm the one who's out there saying, here's what we're doing in USD. I am, I guess, the anchor because they constantly need reinforcement that the Board is still behind them; that we will still allow them to be autonomous. . . . I see my role as being supportive, if you're giving them as much freedom; but I've got to stay removed enough to be able, or supportive enough to be able to keep that project going and giving them the help they need to make significant change.

Most steering committee members described the superintendent's participation in EDUCATION 2000 as supportive, although all committee members agreed that the superintendent actively supports the project. A synopsis of the superintendent's participation was provided:

> He is very supportive of this project. He met with us originally and explained the project, and explained his support for the project, and then he has not become actively involved as far as decision-making within the steering committee. He has pretty much made us an autonomous group. . . He just attended a meeting last week where there were some concerns, and he said, "all I wanted was an explanation; these are your decisions; you make them". . . so I think he has given us the confidence and the support, without at all being overbearing or wanting his ideas to be part of it. He is very willing to just let us go and then just report back to him.

It appeared to most steering committee members that although the superintendent is not a member of the steering committee, he is actively involved in the process. Steering committee members stated:

> Even though he's not at the meetings, he is still made aware; as an enabler, he's making sure it happens and

that to me is an active role.

> When we run into a problem, he's found a way to get it solved; he would find a way to knock down a so called barrier, or find an alternative way to get something accomplished. That's been his basic function.

It became apparent to the researcher that the superintendent's absence from steering committee meetings did not inhibit the development of the project. The project director and the project coordinator indicated that communication between the superintendent and the leadership within the steering committee facilitated the process to implement EDUCATION 2000.

The superintendent utilized other means beyond steering committee meetings to communicate his commitment to EDUCATION 2000. Several steering committee members provided descriptions of how the superintendent communicates his commitment to this project:

> Well, he's totally committed, and he wants it to succeed. He's set aside enough funds for it to succeed. Right now, funding is not a problem in terms of what we have as a line item on the budget; and also the commitment he gets from the Trustees, from the community, and from the teaching staff. I mean, he's told everybody this is what his initiative is. He's firmly committed, and he's giving us all the resources that are needed to get the job done. So I don't know how much more leadership you can get.
>
> I think in a way you feel his presence through his style. I think everyone knows that this particular superintendent believes in collegiality; he lives by that belief. He also believes that that's the way to unleash creativity in a district and to allow people to grow, and I think this is commonly recognized not just by the steering committee, but I think by the staff in general. . . so people believe it much more because they see it practiced.
>
> Aligned with participation and communication,

empowerment is another strategy employed by the superintendent to involve educational stakeholders in the EDUCATION 2000 project. The superintendent described empowerment as a process that includes shared decision-making and accountability. He explained:

> I strongly believe that teachers should be involved in decision-making that affects them directly. . . but it's shared decision-making in a controlled area on limited issues, in a sense; issues that relate to them; not taking over or running the whole show; and there's a sense of accountability, because ultimately, we're going to be looking at student outcomes.

The superintendent tended to emphasize his trust in the steering committee, commenting "I have expressed to them, and I have demonstrated in my behavior, that I have a lot of trust in them, and fortunately I haven't yet experienced anything they've done which has changed my mind."

Facilitating an environment for educational change required the leadership skills as well as strategies of the superintendent and steering committee members. The superintendent reported using the following leadership skills to a great extent: group functioning; administrative/organizational, related to communication with the project director; initiative-taking; trust/rapport building; support; collaboration; and conflict mediation. He did not indicate any weakness in leadership skills.

Steering committee members presented their understanding of the superintendent's use of leadership skills which tended to be similar to the superintendent self-description. Group functioning, initiative-taking,

trust/rapport building, support, collaboration, and confidence building were identified by most participants as leadership skills used by the superintendent.

Steering committee members also provided descriptions of the superintendent's leadership style which tended to incorporate the use of leadership skills. In response to an interview question that asked the participant to identify the superintendent's leadership style as either responding, managing, or initiating, most steering committee members described the superintendent as responding, managing and initiating. Steering committee members indicated that the superintendent's leadership style tended to facilitate communication and commitment.

The superintendent described his leadership style:

> I like to delegate. I'm more comfortable starting things and getting people motivated to do things. I don't necessarily like to manage and I don't manage a lot. It's a very large organization, complex like most large organizations, and so I do have to rely on staff to do things for me; so I delegate a lot, and I rely on them to manage. . . but I do like to respond; and I like to be the one to kind of encourage, and to support, and to push. There's a lot of energy and creativity in things going on in the district which keeps the district moving, hopefully in the right direction. I've got to keep them kind of like shooting at the same target, but not necessarily controlling that they're all going to hit the target.

Similar themes of communication, commitment, and support were noted in responses to questions concerned with the superintendent's attitudes, actions, and/or practices that have been effective in facilitating the work of the steering committee. Most steering committee members cited

the superintendent's actions to prioritize EDUCATION 2000, and to create and maintain the steering committee as an autonomous task force as the most effective.

All steering committee members responded in the negative when asked to give examples of the superintendent's attitudes, actions, and/or practices that have been ineffective or problematic in facilitating the work of the steering committee. A typical response was:

> No. . . I can't. We've been working a year and a half and I can't think of a thing he's done that's got in the way. His door's always open.

In summary, findings from a within-site analysis in USD suggested that:

1. The consistently strong commitment to the EDUCATION 2000 project by the superintendent and the Board of Education greatly enhanced the development of this project for educational change.
2. The direct involvement of the superintendent in initiating, implementing, and institutionalizing the EDUCATION 2000 model--supported by an autonomous leadership team representative of educational stakeholders in the school district--combined with participatory decision-making, increased the feasibility of facilitating school reform.
3. Changes in the decision-making process and responsibilities of teachers, administrators and parents were often facilitated and enhanced by the leadership style of the superintendent.

4. The ways in which the superintendent was actively involved with educational stakeholders in the process of initiating, implementing, and institutionalizing the EDUCATION 2000 model was related to project outcomes.

DISCUSSION

Findings From Cross-Site Analysis

The comprehensive descriptive findings reflecting (a) how superintendents and selected steering committee members perceived their roles; (b) the context in which they evolved; (c) the complex process of initiating, implementing, and institutionalizing the EDUCATION 2000 model; and (d) the apparent outcomes of the process provided the foundation for a cross-site analysis and a discussion of the research questions.

Contextual factors appeared to greatly affect the initiation and implementation of educational change in the rural and urban schools districts. The appropriateness of the proposed innovation to educational stakeholders appeared to be a significant factor in determining the level of commitment and involvement provided by superintendents and steering committee members for the EDUCATION 2000 project. These findings support other studies on educational change that have discovered that implementation is more effective when relatively focused or specific needs are identified; and lack of clarity--diffuse goals and unspecified means of implementation--represents a major

problem at the implementation stage (Fullan, 1982).

The composition of and respect for the steering committee also appeared to be an important component of the context for facilitating initiation and implementation of the EDUCATION 2000 project. Findings suggested the importance of selecting a steering committee that is broadly representative of the educational stakeholders in the school district and the larger community.

The strategies employed by superintendents to involve educational stakeholders in the process of initiating, implementing, and institutionalizing the EDUCATION 2000 model included participation and communication, shared leadership roles, and participatory decision-making. Findings indicated that the direct involvement of the superintendent and verbal support of the EDUCATION 2000 project in the initial decision, implementation, and institutionalization phase strongly affected the direction of the proposed change. It appeared that implementation was more likely to occur when communication between the superintendent and educational stakeholders was clear and consistent.

Findings also suggested a relationship between the shared leadership roles and responsibilities delegated by the superintendent, as a strategy for school improvement, and a sense of commitment to and ownership over the activities to implement the EDUCATION 2000 model.

Although participatory decision-making is embedded in

the EDUCATION 2000 project, the extent to which educational stakeholders were encouraged to have an expanded role in educational decision-making appeared to be dependent upon the superintendent's understanding of project outcomes and his trust in the leadership of the steering committee. Strategies employed by the superintendent to involve steering committee members in the change process also related to the committee's sense of commitment to, and ownership over, the activities to implement the EDUCATION 2000 model. These findings are supportive of similar findings from NEA Mastery in Learning Project (1989) which suggested that when a school community makes its own decisions, these decisions will be effectively and enthusiastically implemented because they are owned by the community. Findings also suggested that the superintendent's attitude had a strong influence on the faculty and that an attitude supportive of shared leadership roles and shared decision-making was extremely important to the project.

The apparent relationship between the leadership style of superintendents and implementation of the EDUCATION 2000 model supported educational change studies which indicated that the commitment and action of local district administrators play a major role in the success of district wide change projects (Fullan, 1982; Huberman & Miles, 1984).

The present findings support the critical role of the superintendent in facilitating or inhibiting educational

change. Research studies indicated that change is a process that takes time and proceeds in phases (Fullan, 1982). Major factors determined the likelihood of initiation, implementation, and institutionalization of educational change projects, and these factors were interactive. The present study focused on the leadership component of change, relating the superintendent's leadership style to changes, or perceived changes in educational goals, attitudes, behaviors, roles, decision-making processes, and organizational structures. Findings suggested that the ways in which the superintendent was committed to and actively involved with educational stakeholders in initiating, implementing and institutionalizing the EDUCATION 2000 model was strongly related to educational change.

Implications

The basic assumption upon which the EDUCATION 2000 National Model Schools Network is built has to do with how school change takes place: that if educational stakeholders are empowered to change--through a process of self-education, critical inquiry, support of partners, adequate time and resources--change can occur (Kniep, 1989). This assumption was the major hypothesis and the focus of research activities for the EDUCATION 2000 project. Findings from the present study, focused on the hypothesized relationship between leadership style of superintendents and educational change, contributed to Kniep's basic

assumption and suggested that it be amended as follows: if educational stakeholders are empowered to change--through a process inclusive of active involvement and unambiguous commitment of the superintendent of schools to the change project, shared leadership roles, participatory decision-making, critical inquiry, self-education, support of partners, adequate time and resources--the potential for institutionalizing educational change is greatly increased.

Revising the dependent variable in Kniep's basic research assumption from "change" to "institutionalizing educational change" is consistent with evidence found in studies and reviews of educational change and innovation which agreed that change projects occur in three broad phases: initiation, implementation, and institutionalization (Fullan, 1982), and focused attention on the impact of the EDUCATION 2000 model or project outcomes.

Findings from the present study (a) confirmed that the commitment and support of the superintendent were critical to initiating and implementing the EDUCATION 2000 model and (b) contributed to understanding the complex and interactive components of the change process by focusing attention on the leadership of the superintendent in institutionalizing educational change projects. The present study (a) cited the superintendent as the individual responsible for facilitating, or inhibiting, an environment in which district wide change can occur; and (b) described the

explicit commitment and active involvement of the superintendent in initiating, implementing, and institutionalizing change as a significant factor in determining process issues and project outcomes.

Finally, the present study is a reminder to educational stakeholders and other researchers not to focus solely on the building level--leadership of the principal and teacher empowerment--but to include the leadership of the superintendent for initiating, implementing, and institutionalizing educational change in a school district.

Recommendations

Empowering educational stakeholders to make decisions about restructuring school districts was a major component in the present study. The superintendent's role in facilitating shared leadership and participatory decision-making was described differently in each school district. Steering committee members provided varied descriptions of their perceptions of empowerment and decision-making capacity. Power and control were apparently critical issues. The EDUCATION 2000 project identified self-education, critical inquiry, support of partners, adequate resources, and time as strategies for empowering steering committee members.

Dunlop and Goldman (1991) stated that the increasing emphasis on professionalism and new forms of collaboration in the current educational reform movement emphasizes the

underlying tension between top-down decision-making and participatory power sharing. They argued that facilitative power, an alternative to traditional interpretations of power in organizations, is power manifested through someone and more accurately describes how power is exercised in school settings. According to Dunlap and Goldman, "facilitative power is rooted in the kind of interaction, negotiation, and mutuality descriptive of professional organizations" (p. 13). Further examination of this construct is needed to develop a more comprehensive and common understanding of the empowerment process in school reform.

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